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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/CBA (DENNIS A. WINSTEAD), EB/EX AND EUR/SE

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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [BEXP](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY NICOSIA SEIZES THE MOMENT TO PROMOTE TRAVEL TO THE
USA

1. Summary: Cypriots love to travel. Specifically, on the Government Controlled part of the island with a total population of approximately 800,000 there were 1,080,512 trips recorded of Cypriots who traveled abroad in 2007. However, less than 15,000 recorded trips were to the USA. Taking into account that Cypriots love to shop and taking advantage of the favorable exchange rates from Euro to US Dollars, Embassy Nicosia seized the opportunity and launched a promotional plan for travel to the USA. Part of that plan and in cooperation with the Consular Section, is to assist travel agents, tour operators, and airline personnel become familiar with the Embassy's visa application procedure so they can assist their customers. With the assistance of the Business Facilitation Incentive Fund (BFIF) and in cooperation with Embassy London and Continental Airlines, Embassy Nicosia co-sponsored a cutting-edge event with Continental and is also funding the Commercial Specialist's trip to the International Travel show (International POW WOW) in May 2008. End Summary.

2. The Economic/Commercial Officer and the Commercial Specialist of Embassy Nicosia held a series of meetings with travel agents, tour operators, and airline representatives in Cyprus to promote the USA as a travel destination. Moreover, the Economic/Commercial Officer and the Commercial Specialist have established a very close relationship with the General Manager and the Chairperson of the Association of Cyprus Travel Agents (ACTA) through which they now can access all ACTA members. Following the meetings and in cooperation with the Consular Section, Embassy Nicosia provided training on how to complete the visa applications online to all interested travel agents and airline personnel. This training offered travel specialists the opportunity to speak knowledgeably to their clients about the visa application process and help them promote high commission-earning travel to this long-haul destination.

3. To show Cypriot travelers that the U.S. is a superb alternative to the traditional Cypriot shopping and/or gambling expeditions to the U.K. or their favorite destination, Greece, Embassy Nicosia organized a cutting-edge event with Continental Airlines (the only U.S. airline represented in Cyprus). Commercial Specialist Stewart Gough was flown in from London to give a presentation at this America-themed event. The event was attended by 10 different airlines represented on the island, over 40 travel agencies/tour operators, media, and other distinguished guests including the Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism.

4. Helping Cypriot travel agents and tour operators establish relationships with U.S. based agencies, hotel groups, and tourist promotion offices in each U.S. state is an important part of the promotion plan. To achieve that, the Commercial Specialist in Nicosia will attend the International Travel Show (POW WOW) in the U.S. from May 31 to June 4, 2008. The trip is funded from the BFIF program.

5. In our follow-up meetings with most travel agents/tour operators, we are informed that the number of Cypriots who plan to travel to

the USA this summer is growing significantly. Nevertheless, for more quantifiable evidence we will have to wait until the end of the year.

[¶6](#). If you wish to get more information on any of these projects, please contact Commercial Specialist Ms. Ephie-Yvonnée Charalambidou charalambidouey@state.gov or +357-22-393362 or Economic/Commercial